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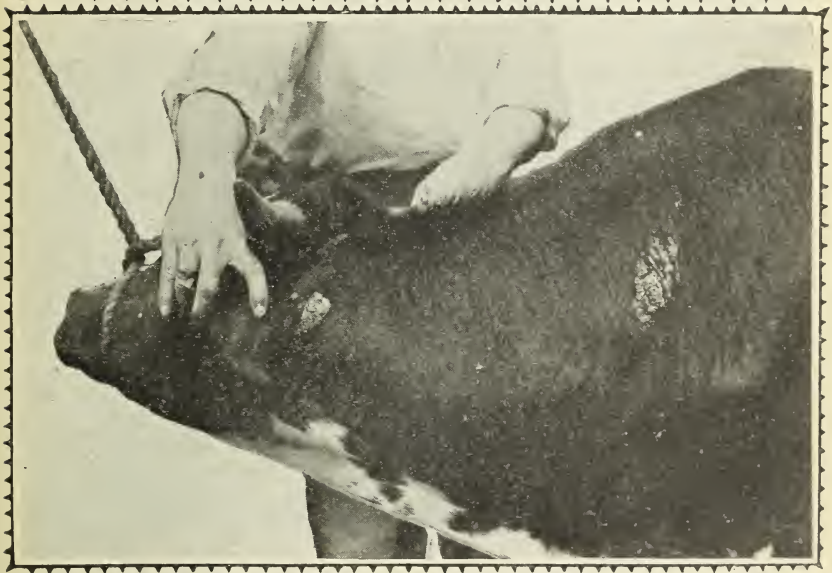
WARTS on CATTLE



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WARTS ON CATTLE

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Warts Found on Many Parts of Body

Warts on cattle, particularly calves and yearlings, are of common occurrence. They are found on many parts of the body, but their location depends somewhat on the age of the animal. In cows warts usually occur on the udder or teats, whereas in cattle under 1 year of age they are seen most frequently on various parts of the head, as on the ears, around the eyes and mouth, and on the sides of the neck and shoulders.

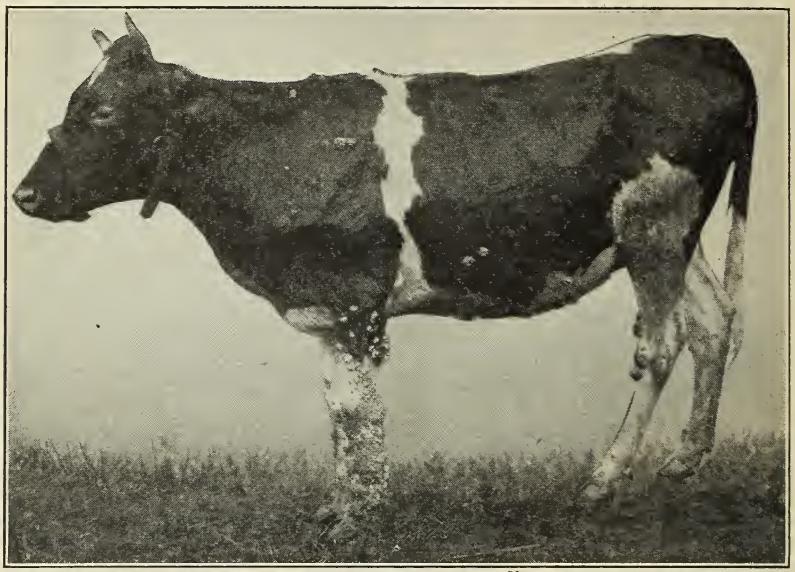

Figure 1.—Heifer seriously affected with warts, chiefly of the cauliflower type. The other side of this animal was equally affected

Warts on young cattle may spread from the original location to different parts of the body (fig. 1) and may eventually cover large areas of the skin.

Injury to Hides and Leather

Occasionally warts, particularly on young cattle, become large and pendulous. As a result they sap the strength and stunt the growth of the animals. Their chief damage, however, is observed in calfskins and cattle hides after tanning. The tanned hides have roughened and weak spots where the warts occurred on the skin and frequently contain numerous pits or holes in places, such as the shoulders, where the skin was thickly studded with warts. These defects give a moth-eaten appearance to the finished leather. As a consequence, the parts affected are considered worthless.

The reduction in the value of hides, because of warts, usually varies from a few per cent to 25 per cent and sometimes more, depending on the extent of skin areas affected. Cattle buyers make discounts for warty animals purchased in the markets.

Since a considerable number of animals are affected with warts and the hides of many of them are greatly reduced in value, the yearly loss from a leather standpoint is doubtless large, though no definite figures are available. A representative of the Tanners' Council of America stated, in December, 1930, that warty hides are considered by packers to be about five times as numerous as they were five years ago.

Many Shapes and Sizes

Warts vary greatly in shape and size. They may be thin, long, and club-shaped, an inch or more in length, and occur singly or in

FIGURE 2.—An experimental wart, about natural size, produced by inoculation with wart material. Numerous experiments of this kind have demonstrated the infectious nature of these growths

clusters (fig. 2); or they may become large cauliflowerlike tumors several inches in diameter, and in extreme cases may weigh several pounds. Occasionally they occur as broad, slightly elevated masses.

Warts may be either hard or soft. The large cauliflowerlike growths are usually soft and show a tendency to bleed and slough, and frequently they give off very offensive odors.

Cause of Warts

Common warts in cattle have been shown by experiments to be infectious. The infective constituent is what is known as a filterable virus, meaning that it will pass through an earthen, germ-retaining filter. By experimental skin inoculations with wart material, these growths can be produced with a fair degree of regularity in healthy cattle under 1 year of age. Under ordinary circumstances infection is thought to take place through injuries to the skin when the injured part comes in contact with warty animals,

rubbing posts, fences, buildings, or any structure with which an affected animal has come in contact.

External Treatment

Warts may occasionally disappear without treatment of any kind, especially as animals become older. Most cases, however, require definite and systematic treatment.

Removal by Clipping or Tying Off

Warts which are small at the place of attachment may be removed by either clipping them off with sterile scissors or tying a sterile thread or slender cord tightly around the wart near the base. In the latter method the warts will slough off in a few days. The stumps of the warts should be touched with either glacial acetic acid or tincture of iodine.

Tying off, as indicated above, is recommended also for warts which, because of their size, are likely to contain a number of blood vessels that would result in more or less bleeding if the warts were removed by cutting. Treat the roots or base of such warts also with either glacial acetic acid or silver nitrate. The removal of extremely large warts by surgical means should be performed by a veterinary surgeon.

Removal by Acid, Iodine, or Oil

Before warts become excessively large they may be destroyed by daily applications of glacial acetic acid or tincture of iodine. Before applying acetic acid, protect the healthy skin immediately surrounding the warts by thoroughly greasing with vaseline or lard. Be careful not to grease the warts as that would protect them also from the acid.

Small warts, as on the udders of cows, will sometimes disappear if kept soft by daily applications of sweet oil or castor oil.

Internal Treatment

If warts are numerous and cover large areas of the body, it may be advisable to give internal treatment also. The usual internal treatment for various skin disorders, including warts, is arsenic in the form of Fowler's solution. The dose is 1 tablespoonful twice daily to cattle 6 to 12 months of age. This method should be considered, however, only an indirect method of treatment. Arsenic treatment should be administered only under the supervision of a veterinarian.

As arsenic may pass into the milk Fowler's solution should not be given to milking cows.

Prevention

Preventive measures consist in removing all warty cattle from the herd, particularly affected calves and yearlings, and in cleaning and disinfecting all exposed stables, pens, chutes, and rubbing posts.

In dairy herds, cows having warts on their teats and udders should be milked last and the milkers should be careful to wash and disinfect their hands thoroughly after each milking to prevent the possible spread of the virus from one animal to another. The essential point in preventing and controlling these growths is to keep in mind that they are infectious or "catching."

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